

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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R 082143Z JAN 76

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5278

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 USUN 0048

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RQ, US, CU

SUBJ: PUERTO RICO

REFS: A. STATE 002729, B. STATE A-7654 OF DEC. 20, 1975

1. WITH THE YEAR BEGINNING ON A SOMEWHAT QUIET NOTE, WE WOULD RESPECTFULLY ASK A MOMENT'S ATTENTION TO THE QUESTION OF PUERTO RICO.

2. WHAT IS COMING IS A LONG SIEGE. THE LEADERSHIP IN THE DEPARTMENT HAS SEEN THIS FOR SOME TIME NOW, AND HAS RECENTLY ALLOWED ITS VIEWS TO BE MADE MORE PUBLIC. THUS THE CONSELLOR TO THE DEPARTMENT WAS RECENTLY QUOTED AS SAYING THAT "THE SOVIET UNION IS ONLY JUST BEGINNING ITS TRULY 'IMPERIAL' PHASE: ITS MILITARY FORCES HAVE ACQUIRED INTERCONTINENTAL REACH ONLY FAIRLY RECENTLY: ITS CAPACITY TO INFLUENCE EVENTS IN REMOTE AREAS IS OF RELATIVELY RECENT STANDING: AND IT IS ONLY JUST ACQUIRING THE HABIT OF DEFINING ITS INTERESTS ON A GLOBAL RATHER THAN ON A SORELY CONTINENTAL BASIS." AN AIDE TO THE SECRETARY WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT "FOR 25 YEARS WE WERE CONTAINING A NATION THAT REALLY DIDN'T HAVE THE POWER TO THREATEN US AROUND THE WORLD, AND THEN AROUND 1970 WHEN RUSSIA BECAME A REAL WORLD THREAT, THE IRONY WAS THAT VIETNAM HAD SAPPED OUR WILL TO CONTINUE CONTAINING THEM."

3. ON A NUMBER OF RECENT OCCASIONS THIS MISSION HAS OFFERED NOT DISSIMILAR COMMENTS, WITH A SPECIAL GLOSS CONCERNING THE
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DISAPPEARANCE OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT IN MOST OF THE POST

INDEPENDENCE REGIMES OF THE FORMER COLONIAL WORLD, LEAVING A RESIDUE OF ILLEGITIMACY TO THE NEW AUTHORITARIANS WHICH LEADS SUCH REGIMES POSITIVELY TO HANKER FOR THE RESPECTABILITY OF SOVIET AUTHORITARIANISM. JUST AS AN ATTACHMENT TO LIBERAL PRINCIPLES ABETTED THE CAUSE OF INDEPENDENCE A GENERATION AGO, TODAY ATTACHMENT TO MARXIST PRINCIPLES SUPPORTS THE CAUSE OF MORE OR LESS DESPOTIC, ONE PARTY RULE OF THE SORT THAT IS NOW NEAR UNIVERSAL. HENCE THE SOVIET IMPERIAL PHASE COMES AT A TIME WHEN IT IS IN FACT RATHER LIKELY TO BE WELCOMED IDEOLOGICALLY IN MUCH OF THE WORLD.

4. THIS COMBINATION OF CIRCUMSTANCES (OR THE FIRST ALONE, IF THE SECOND SEEMS TOO FANCIFUL) ARGUES THAT UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY MUST BEGIN TO ANTICIPATE ATTACKS IN AREAS WHICH MIGHT HAVE SEEMED ONLY A FEW YEARS AGO REMOTE FROM ANY INTERNATIONAL DANGER. THIS IS NOT GOING TO BE EASY FOR US. THE CASE OF PUERTO RICO WHERE REGIONAL (CUBA) FORCES FRIENDLY TO THE USSR HAVE TAKEN THE INITIATIVE, SUGGESTS THAT INDEED IT IS GOING TO BE FORMIDABLY DIFFICULT. FOR SOVIET ATTACKS ON PUERTO RICO BEGAN YEARS AGO, BUT WE HAVE HARDLY YET AWAKENED TO THE REALITY.

5. THE SOVIETS TACTICS ARE FAMILIAR ENOUGH. THEY HAVE EITHER CREATED OR GOT HOLD OF A NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT. A LITTLE OF BOTH, PROBABLY. IN THE CASE OF PUERTO RICO, THERE IS A CARIBBEAN IMPETUS MADE TO ORDER FOR SOVIET EXPLOITATION. "NATURAL" ALLIES ABOUND, FOR THE PUERTO RICANS ARE PERCEIVED AS FELLOW-HISPANICS IN THIS HEMISPHERE AND OFTEN AS FELLOW-COLOREDS IN ANOTHER. HERE IN NEW YORK WE HAVE HAD ALMOST NO INFORMATION ON THE SUBJECT, AND WE RATHER DOUBT THAT THE DEPARTMENT IS HOLDING BACK ON US FOR FEAR OF LEAKS. MOST LIKELY THE DEPARTMENT DOESN'T HAVE ANY INFORMATION EITHER. BUT SUFFICE THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT IN PUERTO RICO FOR SOME TIME, AND AT LEAST SINCE THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT TRUMAN, IT HAS HAD A TERRORIST WING. A COMMUNIST PARTY HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, AND A WELL-FINANCED COMMUNIST PRESS, WHICH WORKS IN A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP TO THE TERRORISTS AND THE INDEPENDENTISTAS GENERALLY.

6. IN COMMUNIST DOCTRINE THERE ARE SURELY SAID TO BE STAGES
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OF DEVELOPMENT OF A LIBERATION MOVEMENT. WE WOULD SUPPOSE THAT A SECOND (OR THIRD OR FOURTH OR WHATEVER) STAGE WAS COMMENCED LAST YEAR AT THE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE AT LIMA IN AUGUST. IN LIMA MORE THAN ONE HALF OF THE NATIONS IN THE WORLD SUPPORTED THE POSITION THAT THE UNITED STATES IS ILLEGALLY IN POSSESSION OF PUERTO RICO. IN AUGUST THE DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS, UNDER TANZANIAN LEADERSHIP, UNDERTOOK

TO GRANT OFFICIAL STATUS TO THE PUERTO RICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT. THE UNITED STATES REACTED FIRMLY AND THE MOVE ABORTED, ALTHOUGH ONLY NARROWLY AND AFTER THE EXERTION OF MUCH EFFORT ON OUR PART. BUT ANOTHER WILL FOLLOW. AND ANOTHER. AND ANOTHER. IN OCTOBER 1975 AT A WORLD WOMEN'S CONGRESS IN BERLIN, PUERTO RICO WAS REPRESENTED AS AN INDEPENDENT STATE (AS, PLEASE NOTE, WAS HAWAII). ON OCTOBER 27, 1975 A PUERTO RICAN LIBERATION BOMB BLEW UP THE FRONT OF THE UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS. WE SHOULD NOT OVERLOOK THE LIKELIHOOD OF FUTURE ATTEMPTS TO DISRUPT OUR ACTIVITIES.

7. OF GREAT IMPORTANCE, THE FORMER COLONIAL NATIONS ARE MORE AND MORE GETTING INTO THE HABIT OF TREATING PUERTO RICO AS A COLONY WITH THE SAME STATUS AND THE SAME PRESUMED

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 USUN 0048

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FUTURE AS THEIR OWN COLONIES ONCE HAD.

8. AT PRESENT THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT SEEM ABLE TO DO ANYTHING TO PREVENT THIS. EVEN NATIONS BEGGING US TO SAVE THEM FROM COMMUNIST ARMS SIMULTANEOUSLY DENOUNCE OUR CARIBBEAN IMPERIALISM, WITNESS ZAMBIA, AS C. R. SULZBERGER NOTED IN A RECENT DESPATCH FROM LUSAKA. IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE VOTE OF THE DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE, THE SECRETARY DIRECTED THAT SOME MEASURES BE TAKEN AGAINST THOSE NATIONS WHICH HAD VOTED WITH THE CUBANS, THAT IS TO SAY THE RUSSIANS, DESPITE OUR NOTES STATING THAT THIS WOULD BE AN UNFRIENDLY ACT. AS ONE LOOKS AT THE ACTIONS TAKEN, OR RATHER NOT TAKEN, IT IS PRETTY CLEAR THAT FOR MOST NATIONS, THERE IS NO

COST TO SUCH AN ACT. TANZANIA, FOR EXAMPLE, CONTINUES TO BE THE LEADING AFRICAN RECIPIENT OF AMERICAN AID. IF ANYTHING, THE LESSON IS THAT WE PLACATE THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO INTERFERE IN OUR INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

9. THIS IS NOT LIKELY TO CONTINUE MUCH LONGER. ALTHOUGH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE RESISTS IT, AND UNDERSTANDABLY, THE REALITY IS THAT AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IS HEAVILY DICTATED BY ETHNIC CONSIDERATIONS. SOONER OR LATER, AND MY JUDGMENT WOULD BE SOONER, THE SOVIET/CUBAN ATTACK ON PUERTO RICO WILL BECOME A DOMESTIC POLITICAL ISSUE. THE CHARGE WILL BE MADE THAT THE DEPARTMENT HAS NOT DEFENDED THE CITIZENS OF PUERTO RICO AGAINST COMMUNIST SUBVERSION AND TERROR, AND THE HISPANIC CITIZENS OF THE NATION WILL BE ASKED TO SUPPORT THAT CANDIDATE OR PARTY THAT PROMISES TO DO WHAT THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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EVIDENTLY WILL NOT DO. IT WILL NOT BE PRETTY. IT COULD COMMENCE THIS YEAR, INDEED IT IS LIKELY TO DO SO.

10. MOST LIKELY IT IS TOO LATE TO PREVENT THIS. ON THE OTHER HAND, IT SHOULD BE MADE CLEAR THAT ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS AND OTHERS IN THE DEPARTMENT ARE DOING THEIR DAMNDEST, AND IT IS STILL POSSIBLE TO MAKE A RECORD. PUERTO RICO SHOULD BE HIGH ON THE LIST OF MULTILATERAL ISSUES WHICH WERE THE SUBJECT OF THE SECRETARY'S RECENT CABLE TO ALL AMBASSADORS. THIS MISSION HAS WORKED OUT A TENTATIVE STRATEGY FOR HANDLING THE ISSUE WHEN NEXT IT COMES BEFORE THE DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE, PROBABLY IN FEBRUARY. BUT SURELY THIS IS A SUBJECT THAT DEMANDS MUCH MORE COMPREHENSIVE ENQUIRY, PROBABLY A NSSM. IN THE MEANTIME, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OR SOMEONE OF ALMOST COMPARABLE STATURE, SHOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH THE GOVERNOR OF PUERTO RICO TO OBTAIN HIS VIEWS AND HIS SUPPORT IN A JOINTLY AGREED APPROACH TO THE ENCOUNTERS OF THE NEXT TWELVE MONTHS.
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